

A

## S E R M O N

PREACH'D in the

Parish-Church of *All-Saints* in *Northampton*,

BEFORE THE

PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS

OF THE

County I N F I R M A R Y

For SICK and LAME POOR,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1750.

---

By *THOMAS HARTLEY*, A.M.Rector of *Winwick*, in *Northamptonshire*.

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N O R T H A M P T O N:

Printed by WILLIAM DICEY;—and sold, for the  
Benefit of the Charity, by the Booksellers in *Northampton*;  
and by *Benj. Dod*, in *Ave-Mary-Lane*, *London*. 1750.

[Price Six-pence.]

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At the Anniversary Meeting of the Governors and  
Subscribers to the COUNTY INFIRMARY at  
Northampton, on Monday, Sept. 24, 1750.

*A* G R E E D, That their Thanks be given to the Rev.  
Mr. HARTLEY, for his SERMON preached this  
Day before Them; and that He be desired to deliver a Copy  
of the same to the SOCIETY, to be printed immediately.

Northampton, *President.*

Publish'd by Order of the  
Governors, to be sold  
for the Benefit of the  
Charity.

*Henry Woolley, Sec.*

T O

The Most Noble

CHARLES, Duke of GRAFTON,

*Grand Visitor ;*

The Right Honourable

JAMES, Earl of NORTHAMPTON,

*Perpetual President ;*

The Right Reverend

JOHN, Lord Bishop of PETERBOROUGH,

*Diocesan ;*

A N D

The Rest of the GOVERNORS of the  
COUNTY-INFIRMARY at *Northampton ;*

*This* SERMON

Is most humbly dedicated by

*Their most Obedient Servant,*

*Winwick,*  
*Sept. 25, 1750.*

THOMAS HARTLEY.

*The following SERMONS (sold for the Benefit of the Charity) may be had at the COUNTY-INFIRMARY in Northampton; of Mr. Dicey's Newsmen; or of Mr. Dod, Bookseller to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, in Ave-Mary-Lane, London.*

1. **T**HE Rev. Dr. Grey's Sermon (to which are added the STATUTES and RULES of the Society) preach'd at the Opening of the County-Infirmery at Northampton, on Thursday, March 29, 1744.

2. The Rev. Mr. Holme's Sermon, preach'd at the Anniverfary Meeting, Oct. 24, 1745.

3. The Rev. Mr. Layng's Sermon, preach'd at the Anniverfary Meeting, Sept. 22, 1746.

4. The Rev. Dr. Bishop's Sermon, preach'd at the Anniverfary Meeting, Sept. 22, 1747.

5. The Bishop of Peterborough's Sermon, preach'd at the Anniverfary Meeting, Sept. 22, 1748.

6. The Rev. Mr. Nixon's Sermon, preach'd at the Anniverfary Meeting, Sept. 22, 1749.

N.B. Before the Foundation of the INFIRMARY, a Sermon, with a peculiar Reference to the Design, was preach'd at the Dissenting Meeting House in Northampton, by the Rev. Dr. Doddridge,—publish'd at the Request of those who heard it;—and sold by J. Waugh, in Grace-Church-Street, London; and by W. Dicey, in Northampton,—the Proprietors of the Impression.



( I )

I COR. xii. 31.

----- *And yet shew I unto you a more excellent Way.*

**T**H E S E Words are a Kind of connecting Clause, bringing into one View of Comparifon the Subjects of this and the following Chapter: In the former the Apoftle enumerates fome of thofe extraordinary Gifts which were beftow'd on the Church in its primitive State, as the Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Diversities of Tongues, with fome others, which, tho' different in Kind and Operation, yet, he tells the *Corinthians*, were Vouchsafements of one and the fame Spirit, various Administrations under the fame Lord and Head of the Church, and therefore to be employ'd with a fingle Eye to his Glory, and for the Profit of his Members, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Chrift.* (a) And then, by aptly pointing out the Analogy betwixt Chrift's myftical Body and the Body natural, he infers, from the mutual Relation and Dependence of the feveral Parts and Members

(a) Eph. iv. 12.

## ( 2 )

Members thereof, the Necessity of friendly Agreement and true Fellowship, of perfect Harmony and Union amongst all the Individuals of the Church, whatever Difference there might be in their Gifts and Endowments respectively ; that those who were distinguished with the highest and most honourable Allotments ought not, upon that Account, to be high-minded, and lord it over such of their Brethren as had received less ; nor these, on the other Hand, repine, because of the Inferiority of their Office, as tho' they were less useful or necessary in the Oeconomy of the Church : But that, as they had received all of the same Spirit, and were joined together in one Body, so they should jointly contribute their Supplies to the common Welfare of the Whole, and, as Fellow-Members, cherish the same Care and affectionate Regard one for another, that so there might be no Schism in the Body. He concludes this Subject with exhorting them to *covet earnestly the best Gifts*, not such as would bring most Honour to their Persons, but such as might best advance the Glory of God, such as were most needful for the converting of Sinners, or the edifying of their Brethren, and such as were best suited to their Instrumentality and Usefulness in the Management of them : *And yet, says he, shew I unto you a more excellent Way ; i. e. great and glorious as such supernatural Endowments may appear in the Eyes of*  
Men,



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Men, whatever Honour they may reflect on the Christian Religion, however cogent a Proof they are of its Divinity, yet declare I unto you that which is a still higher Recommendation of it, more acceptable to God, more profitable to Man---and then he goes on---*Tho' I speak with the Tongues of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal; and tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries and all Knowledge; and tho' I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing:* And so proceeds to the End of the following Chapter, shewing how unavailing to Salvation the Gifts of the Spirit are without this Grace of the Spirit, describing its many excellent Properties, and concluding with that well-known Preference----*Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity:* Greatest, if we respect the Dignity of its Nature, for however excellent Things are spoken of FAITH, yet it is only the Hand-maid to *Love*; HOPE, however glorious and animating, comforts us only with the Expectation of good Things, but CHARITY is a present Earnest of the good Things themselves; and greatest it is likewise, if we respect its Permanency; for *Faith* shall be swallow'd up in Vision, and *Hope* will terminate in Fruition, (*for when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*) but *Charity* will

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will be the Enjoyment itself in its fullest Accomplishment; for where all is *Love*, there all is Joy and Peace.---In a word, CHARITY assimilates us to Angels, unites us to God, and endureth for ever---*Charity never faileth*.

IN the Progress of this Discourse I shall consider this Divine Grace of CHARITY in its *largest* Extent, as it takes in our Love to God and Man, and so becomes the End of the Commandment, the fulfilling of the Law in the Duties of *both* Tables; for our Lord has pronounc'd the Principle to be alike in both, tho' it differ in the Object and Exercise of it: And, in speaking to the *second* Branch of this Duty, I shall consider it with a particular Reference to the Occasion of our present Meeting.

To begin with our Love of God, that *first and great Commandment*, the chief End and Happiness of Man, the Fountain of the Divine Life in the Soul,---from which, as its proper Source, streams forth true Christian Philanthropy; and from which, as its sanctifying Principle, every Religious Act and Temper derives its Beauty and Excellence.

Now let it be observ'd, that our Love of God rises in Proportion to the (a) Manifestation of his Love to us (b), and consequently must ascend

(a) 1 John, iv. 19.

(b) This is not meant to exclude or lessen any other Motives to the Love of God, particularly that which proceeds from the Consideration of the Excellencies and Perfections of the Divine Nature, concerning which many Persons of eminent Piety have spoken



## ( 5 )

ascend higher under the Christian Dispensation than it possibly cou'd under any other; for herein is the Love of God superlatively display'd, in that *He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life* (a). And here it will be needful to glance at the State of Religion in the World before the Coming of *Christ*, as it stood divided into Heathens and Jews: As to the former, how does their gross Idolatry, their wretched Superstitions, and their unworthy Conceptions of the Divine Nature argue their Ignorance in the first Elements of Natural Religion! But take the wisest, take the best amongst them; I give you *Socrates*, I give you *Plato*, I give you *Archimedes*, Great Names, and of good Report! And yet, poor Heathens, shall we more admire that you went so far, or that you came so short in what most concern'd you to know? Say, *Socrates*, that thou believedst in one God; yet thou knewest Him not (nor was it thy Fault) as a Reconciled God in the Son of his Love, and, as such, the Fa-  

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spoken such exalted Things: But, thro' the prevailing Dulness and Corruption of Man's Nature, we find, that Arguments, drawn from this Source, are not of such general Use as could be wish'd; and that their Influence extends little farther than to Persons fitted by great Elevation of Spirit, and Abstractedness of Thought, (and, I may add too, by great Purity of Heart) for Divine Contemplations: And even these, it must be allow'd, can no where take such amiable and animating Views of the Glory of God, as in the Face of *Jesus Christ*.

(a) John iii. 16.

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ther of Mercies, and God of all Comfort. Say, *Plato*, justly admir'd Heathen, that the Soul's Immortality was not hid from thee; yet the Way to a happy Immortality the Light of Nature cou'd not teach thee. Say, lastly, *Archimedes*, Did the Heavens declare to thee the Glory of God? yet that Man was an Heir of Glory they declared not: Did the Firmament shew forth his Handy-Work as its Creator? yet no Star therein cou'd lead thee to *Christ*, the Power of God unto Salvation, as thy Redeemer --- Here, Philosopher, thy Perspective fail'd thee, such Knowledge was too high for thee; a God Incarnate uniting our Nature to Himself, that we might become the Sons of God, is an Abyfs of Wonders which thy Line fathom'd not; thou could'st not attain unto this Wisdom neither in the Height above, nor in the Depth beneath: It is higher than the Heaven, what could'st thou do? deeper than Hell, what could'st thou know? The Measure of such Love is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Conclude we then, that the wisest and best Heathens, for want of Revelation, cou'd not attain to any Degree of Divine Love comparable to the Measure of the Christian, being unacquainted with the Extent of God's Love to Man in his most important Interest: Besides, being Strangers to the Doctrine of the Fall, they could not explain the Evil they saw, both in the natural and moral  
World,



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World (*a*), in any just Consistency with the Divine Wisdom and Goodness: And this render'd their Conceptions and Reasonings touching the Attributes and Providence of God perplex'd and dark; and therefore we the less wonder that the Worship of the most knowing among them was little better than erecting an Altar *To the unknown God*.

To the Jews indeed God vouchsaf'd a Discovery of his Nature and Will, and gave them a Law for their Directory to lead them to Himself, for the End of the Commandment was Love; but they attained not to the End of the Commandment, and so it became to them a killing Letter (*b*), pronouncing Death on their Disobedience, whilst it gave them not Grace and Strength for Performance, for such Communication belong'd to a higher Dispensation, even a spiritual one; and therefore however glorious the Ministration of Condemnation was in the Promulgation of the Law, and in the awful Display of God's Power and Majesty, yet it was to be done away when He who was

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(*a*) Their Ignorance of this, probably, first gave Rise to the Supposition of a Duality of Gods, as held by some of the most antient Philosophers in their Doctrine of the two Principles, the one of Good, the other of Evil.—The former was call'd by the Persian *Magi*, *Oromasdes*; the latter, *Arimanius*. This absurd Error, under some Alterations and Improvements, was afterwards adapted by the *Manicheans* in the third Century. See *Bayle's Dict. Art. Manicheans*. See also *Theol. Ancienne par Chev. RAMSAY*.

(*b*) Gal. iii. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 6.



the End of the Law for Righteousness should come, as having no comparative Glory in respect of that Ministration which so far excelleth in Glory (*a*) ; when God's Justice shou'd give Place to his Goodness, and Mercy rejoice against Judgment.----Hence we may see the absolute Necessity there was of Gospel Salvation for the Recovery of fallen Man, in that no outward Rule of Action (*b*), tho' of Divine Appointment, cou'd lead him to God in the Way of acceptable Love and Obedience, because of the Weakness of the Flesh in its State of natural Corruption: *If there had been a Law given which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law* (*c*).

AND now we are led to that wonderful Mystery of our Redemption, God manifest in the Flesh to destroy the Works of the Devil,  
even

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 10, & seq.

(*b*) The Energy of Divine Grace, as a sanctifying Principle in the Heart, made no Part nor Promise of the Mosaic Dispensation, so that Man's Nature could not be reform'd by it ;—and, therefore, the Prophets and holy Men under the Law were not saved by the Law, but by the Regenerating Spirit of Christ working in them, and speaking thro' them. — Salvation was then the same free Gift, and by the same free Grace, thro' Faith, as now, tho' not reveal'd in the Way of a publick Dispensation 'till afterwards, when that better Covenant took Place, whose distinguishing Property and Privilege it shou'd be, with respect to all the Faithful under it, that the Divine Laws shou'd be within them, as a powerful living Principle of Love and Obedience,—*not written in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshy Tables of the Heart, with the Spirit of the Living God.* Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. x. 16.

(*c*) Gal. iii. 21.

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even all that Sin and Satan had done in our fallen Nature. In this Consolation of *Israel* we have the Substance of all Types and Shadows, the Accomplishment of all Promises and Prophecies, and the Fulfilling of the Law for all them that believe to the Saving of the Soul. *God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, bath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son (a)---*And what was the Message? It was Love; for, speaking of all them that received Him, he saith, *I have declared unto them thy Name, and will declare it, that the Love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (b)* Now, in an Evangelical Sense, God's Name is Love, for *He was in Christ reconciling the World unto Himself: (c)* And therefore with great Propriety does the Gospel signify *Glad Tidings*.

AND as in the Process of our Redemption by Jesus Christ we behold one great continu'd Mystery of Love, so, as was the Work, such also was the End of it, *viz.* to bring back Man to the Love of God; for as in his Departure from this consisted his Sin and Ruin, so in his Return to it lay the only possible Means of his Recovery. To this End Christ liv'd a perfect Pattern of Divine Love, teaching us thereby to follow his Steps: To this End He both preach'd and practis'd Poverty of Spirit and Self-Denial,

by

(a) Heb. i. 1, 2. (b) John xvii. 26. (c) 2 Cor. v. 19.



( 10 )

by such instructive Lessons to caution us against placing a fancy'd Happiness in those Possessions and Gratifications which only serve to alienate our Affections from Him who is the sole Fountain of true Felicity: And to the end that He might bring about a twofold Reconciliation between an offended God and sinful Man, He laid down his Life, slaying, by the atoning Blood of his Cross, the Enmity betwixt them; and now continues under the perfecting Dispensation of his Spirit to shed abroad the Love of God in our Hearts, and to give us Power to become the Sons of God, by a Participation of the Divine Nature.

WHERE is the Wise, where is the Disputer of this World, who go about to rob the Christian of his best Hope, this Hope full of Immortality, and to sap the surest Foundation of our Love to God, by labouring to undermine our Faith in his best Love to us? But know, Unbeliever, that however Christ crucify'd may be to the carnal Heart a Stumbling-block, and to the conceited Wisdom of the proud Disputer Foolishness, yet to us who believe He is *the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. Look up, O Christian, and meditate on the Sufferings of thy bleeding, dying Saviour, think on thy Sins which pierc'd his sacred Side, on the Death of the Cross he endur'd to deliver thee from eternal Death, and on the Shame He despis'd to advance thee to Glory; and when  
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## ( II )

thou thinkest thereon, refrain, if thou canst, from owning, that as no Sorrow was ever like his Sorrow, so no Love ever equall'd his Love. How comes it in general that we are so little affected with these Views of his Redeeming Love? Is it not because our Hearts are more immovable than the Earth which quak'd, more impenetrable than the Rocks which rent at his Passion? Why burn they not within us? Why kindle they not into Flames of holy Gratitude and devout Affection whilst we open the Scriptures and preach unto you Jesus? Is it not, sad Consideration! because we have given so much of them to the World, to the Creatures, and to our Lusts, (a) and therefore the Love of the Father and of the Son has no Place in many of us. (b) ---Let us then cast out our Idols, and put away the cursed Thing that separates betwixt our Saviour and our Souls, and then we shall know what the Love of God meaneth. ---*Give me thy Heart* (c) is the Voice of the Lord to every Son and Daughter of *Adam*; and if we will but consent to the Conveyance, He will replenish 'em with his Love and the Graces of his Spirit, and they shall become *Temples of the Living God*: (d) In his Light shall we see Light; and in his Love shall we feel Love: For this excellent Grace of CHARITY is not the genuine Offspring of an apostate Spirit,

(a) Luke xvi. 13. (b) 1 John, ii. 15. (c) Prov. xxiii. 26.  
 (d) 1 Cor. iii. 16. & 2 Cor. vi. 16.

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Spirit, but a pure Emanation of the Divinity in our Souls reflected back upon its Source.

BUT let us pass from the *first* to the *second* Table; for *this Commandment have we, that he, who loveth God, love his Brother also.* (a)

Now this Branch of *Charity* is high in Rank and Eminence among the Duties of the Christian Life, and like unto the first (b). It was our Lord's Command to his Disciples more than once, that they should love one another (c); nay, He makes it a Badge of their Discipleship (d): It is laid down as a necessary Appendage of our Love to God (e); a Mark of his dwelling in us (f); a Test of true Faith (g). To which we may add, that it is the very Spirit that animates all the relative Duties, giving them Life, Direction and Uniformity: It is the Spring of Truth in all our Words, and the Basis of Justice in all our Dealings: It regulates our Obedience, sanctifies our Alms, and ennobles every Social Virtue: It is so necessary to the Comfort and Well-Being of Society, that, where the Principle is wanting, to practise the very Appearance of it is consider'd as a valuable Part of Education, and Politeness is made the Substitute of Benevolence; so estimable is that Virtue, whose very Counterfeit the World holds respectable. But, if we mean to be Christians indeed

(a) 1 John, iv. 21. (b) Matt. xxii. 39. (c) John xiii. 34. & xv. 12. (d) John xiii. 35. (e) 1 John, 4. 21. (f) 1 John, iv. 12. (g) Gal. v. 6.



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indeed, our *Love* must be *without Dissimulation* (a): The bare Profession of it will neither profit ourselves nor others; for a feign'd Virtue, as it is without Power and Solidity, so it must want Effect and Consistency.

LET us now, my Brethren, bring ourselves to this Test; let us measure ourselves by this Standard: The one true Church of Christ is the Communion of Saints, and *Charity* is the Life and Soul of it: Is then the Love of God shed abroad in our Hearts, and have we fervent *Charity* among ourselves? For, be it known of a Truth, that as much as we possess of this Heavenly Treasure, so much have we of Christianity, and no more; and that without it all ZEAL for Religion is but Contention, all MODES of Worship but Formality, and all ORTHODOXY but vain Opinion.

CHARITY, or Love to our Neighbour, may objectively be consider'd under this threefold Distinction; The Love of Affection, the Love of Benevolence, and the Love of Beneficence.

By the first I mean not that instinctive Principle of Tenderneſs which we feel in ourselves towards our Descendents and near Relatives, for this has its Ground in Nature, and therefore is in no wise peculiar to the Christian Dispensation, tho' capable of receiving all Improvements from it: Nor yet do I mean those Engagements of Friendship which we see in the World, arising

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(a) Rom. xii. 19.



from Similitude of natural Temper, or Manners, Combination of Interest, or Sameness of Pursuits; for such Union often binds together the Carnal and Unconverted: But, by *Charity* of Affection here, I understand that Gospel-Disposition which St. *John* lays down as one Evidence of our renew'd State, where he says, *We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren (a)*: Now such are all they who bear the Impress of the Divine Image on their Souls, and are led by the Spirit of God to set their Affections on Things above, and to order their Lives and Conversation as becometh the Gospel of Christ: And this is a powerful and constraining Love, nay, stronger than Death itself; for such are willing, if need be, to lay down their Lives for the Brethren: Such was the Love of the Primitive Christians even to a Proverb, and the same will be the Love of all true Christians to the End of the World; for however they are divided or dispers'd throughout the whole Earth among the several *outward* Churches, yet they are all of one Heart and one Mind in the Essence of Faith and Things pertaining to God; and they are of one Communion, for they have been all made to drink into one Spirit: They are mystical Members under one Head, Fellow-Heirs of the same Promises, Fellow-Travellers to the same Heavenly City, and will in the End form

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(a) 1 John, iii. 14.

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one glorious Church Triumphant in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. In a Word, this Evangelical Temper is nothing less than a Divine Principle in the Soul communicating with the same in our Brethren, and so uniting all, that are Partakers of it, in a holy Fellowship of such Love, Joy and Peace, as passeth the Understanding of *all other Men*.

BUT as we are to love the Brotherhood, *Christ's* faithful Servants, with a distinguish'd and peculiar Affection; so,

*Secondly*, WE are to honour ALL Men with the Love of a benevolent Respect; for the same Charity, that connects in close Union those who are Fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the Household of God, extends its Benignity to all such as, tho' Members of the visible Church, are yet Aliens from the spiritual Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise; nay, it enlarges itself to all Mankind without Exception; for one Property belonging to it is, that it hopeth all Things, and therefore it waiteth patiently, looking for the Time when it may please God to bring them nigh by the Blood of *Christ*, who are now afar off: Accordingly, the *charitable* Christian labours for the Conversion of his Brethren in the Flesh; prays for those that pray not for themselves; studies to convince the Unbelieving, and to reclaim the Erroneous; and thinks nothing



too much to do for those Souls for which *Christ* dy'd, if so be that by any Means he may become an Instrument of gaining some: Nay, tho' his Good be undeservedly evil-spoken of, and when he speaketh to them of Peace, their Souls everlasting Peace, they make themselves ready for Battle, and requite him Evil for his Good-Will; yet even so, that *Charity*, which suffereth long and is kind, endureth all Things, even Reproach and Persecution, with Patience and Forgiveness, *not rendering Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwise Blessing*. Thus is *Charity* kind to those that hate and persecute us, and so stands differenc'd from that Species of Philanthropy which rises no higher than a bare Exchange of Good-Will and good Offices, and ought, therefore, to be considered rather as a (a) virtuous Kind of Traffick than a Gospel Grace.

I COME, *thirdly*, to speak of *Charity* under View of Beneficence to the Poor; and in this Light we behold it in its Fruits, as the Principle call'd forth into Act, and which may, therefore, properly be styl'd the Expression or Evidence of our *Charity*, as it respects the temporal Wants of our needy Brethren.

AND here let it be observ'd, that as true *Charity* always produces this Effect to the Extent of our Power, so it is this inward Disposition that dignifies and consecrates the outward Act;

(a) Luke vi. 22.



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Act : For as there may be a mistaken Zeal for Religion, even to the giving our Bodies to be burnt for what we may call such, and yet without any true Love for God in our Hearts ; so likewise the same Apostle tells us, that we may bestow all our Goods to feed the Poor, and yet, notwithstanding such a Distribution, be void of the Spirit of *real Charity*. But I am now speaking of and recommending that Kind of Beneficence, which is the Fruit of Christian Benevolence : And, among the various Occasions which offer for the Exercise of it, the Relief of the sick and lame Poor of our County, under the Provisions of a Publick INFIRMARY, is that which lays Claim to our present Attention.

AND here it may be remark'd in Behalf of these Institutions, which I think holds true of few others, even the most excellent, that the Invention of Man has not yet been able to furnish us with any Objections to them ; which Argument concludes no less strongly for their confess'd publick Utility, than for their being founded on the most allow'd Principles of Humanity. Many Considerations offer, which powerfully recommend Foundations of this Kind to our Encouragement and Support, and some which challenge a Preference of Regard to them above most others :

As, *first*, if we consider the Greatness of the Distress. Poverty join'd to Sickness, or to an  
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ulcerated, broken or dislocated Frame of Body, bears doubly hard upon human Nature, and Eloquence must fail, where such complicated Sufferings cannot move; for a *Lazarus* at the Gate is, indeed, a most affecting Orator, where the Heart is not harden'd to a Degree of Insensibility more than brutal.

A SECOND Recommendation of these Houses of Mercy is, that, in this Exercise of our Bounty, we are safe, both with respect to the Objects and the Application of it: As to the former, due Provision is made for sufficient Information concerning the Poverty of the Parties to be admitted: And as to their bodily Maladies, there are few Cases which do not explain themselves by corresponding Symptoms, or can elude the skilful Observations of the Persons appointed to inspect and examine them; so that it is not Pretence but Reality, not an artful Story, but actual Distress, that here solicits our compassionate Regard. And, in respect to the proper Application of the Sums sent in and collected for the Support of this our INFIRMARY, the Prudence, Condition and Character of the Persons who honour the Direction of it, the regular Accounts annually publish'd, and a free Access to the Books to satisfy any more minute Enquirer, are abundant Security on this Head.

A THIRD Excellency of this *Charity* is the Care taken to promote and expedite, in the best Manner, the Cure of the Patients by a voluntary,



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tary, regular, and gratuitous Attendance of Physicians and Surgeons of approv'd Judgment and Character in their Professions, and who on that Account, as well as by reason of their *charitable* Care in directing all Things relating to Diet, Cleanliness, and other needful Accommodations, may justly be styl'd *principal Benefactors* to this excellent Work, whilst we have the Satisfaction of seeing the Benefit, intended to the Poor by our Contributions, taking Effect at the easiest Expence, and thereby render'd the more extensive.

I SHALL only mention one more considerable Benefit arising from these Institutions, and that is the RELIGIOUS Use and Improvement of their Visitations, which we may justly hope for from the Patients in the future Part of their Lives : And here the Benefit of these Houses will rise in Proportion to the greater Number who receive their Cure in them, than what cou'd reasonably be expected under the Want of such salutary Provisions ; so that the saving a Life, under God, is oftentimes the Means of saving a Soul from Death. It is before we are afflicted, that we are most prone to go wrong : We cannot but be sensible how apt the untam'd Spirits, flowing from an active and vigorous State of Health, are to run away with our Seriousness, and to hurry us into Vanity, and a Forgetfulness of our Creator : But when the chastening Hand of the Lord is upon us ; when Sickness  
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or fractur'd Bones have shaken the Walls wherein we trusted, and brought down our Strength in our Journey, the Pride of Man is naturally humbled, the hard Heart mollify'd, and the Afflicted taught to cry unto the Lord in his Distress: Thus does He dispose us to seek for the Strength and Succours of his Grace by the Weakness and Sufferings of our mortal Nature, and casts us down on purpose that He may lift us up, that we may know and feel, that our *Help cometh even from the Lord, who hath made Heaven and Earth* (a). It is our Duty to improve these weaning and instructive Providences to the spiritual Welfare of our Brethren, and to co-operate with them, by supplying the most likely Means of their Cure, that the Mercy of a Recovery may give the additional Weight of Gratitude to the good Impressions which bodily Afflictions first excited, that so being led, both by the Goodness and Severity of God's Dealings, to Repentance and Amendment, they may, when they depart, have Cause to say, upon this Account also, It is good for us to have been here.

AND here our Subject leads us to lament the sad Havock and Destruction which SIN hath brought upon the Earth in the various painful Diseases and Sufferings to which the Condition of Mortality exposes us.---How has the deadly Poison infected our Nature, and diffus'd universal

(a) Psalm cxxi. 2.

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Universal Corruption through the human Race; wherein the lurking Venom carries on the fatal Work as certainly, tho' less sensibly, under the conceal'd Approaches of a gradual Decay, as by the more violent Attacks of a Calenture or Epilepsy; insomuch that it may truly be said of the whole Body of Mankind, that from the Sole of the Foot unto the Head, there is no Soundness in it; and well, therefore, may the World be compar'd to one Great INFIRMARY, where Death's Harbingers and Purveyors are preparing to execute on all that irrevocable Sentence, *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return.* Ought we not then to have Compassion on our Fellow-Servants, seeing that we ourselves also are in the same Condemnation? But, alas! the Malady of Man's Nature is gone still deeper, it has reach'd the immortal Part of it; nay, it was the Disease of his Soul which entail'd that Corruption and Mortality upon his Body, on account of which Man, in his highest earthly Honour, is compared to the Beasts that perish (a).

WE read that Almighty God, upon taking a Survey of the Six Days Work of Creation, pronounc'd of every Thing which He had made, that it was very good: How beautiful and perfect then must he have been in his better Part, for whose Sake all Things were created! How excellent that Creature who was made

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(a) Psalm xlix. 12.



in the Image, and after the Likeness, of his Creator ! But he lusted after the Vanity of Time, and so lost the Riches of Eternity ; together with his Innocence his Divine Light, and Love, and Purity, departed from him----*God made Man upright, but he sought out many Inventions (a) ; he sought to be happy independently of God, and so lost his Happiness in Him. Hence by Nature our sad Alienation from the Life of God : Instead of Heavenly Wisdom, a serpentine Craft ; instead of Divine Love, gross and corrupt Affections ; and, in the room of that perfect Harmony in all its Powers and Faculties which tun'd the Soul to Peace, all the Discord and Rage of conflicting Passions.----- Behold, O Man ! in this thy aggravated Misery of a distemper'd Soul and Body, the Greatness of thy Fall, and sad Apostacy ! But behold also the Greatness of Redeeming Love, the infinite Compassions of thy so much neglected Saviour ! who, when thou wast cast out in the open Field to the loathing of thy Person, passed by thee, and when He saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, said unto thee---Live. I passed by thee, and looked upon thee ; and I spread my Skirt over thee, and cover'd thy Nakedness ; yea, I swore unto thee, and enter'd into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine (b).* This Display of our Lord and Saviour's Commiseration and Love to the fallen

(a) Eccles. vii. 29.

(b) Ezek. xvi. 5, 6, 8.



## ( 23 )

fallen human Race is beautifully figur'd in the Mercy which the good *Samaritan* shew'd to the poor wounded Traveller that fell among Thieves (a).---The Priest and the Levite pass'd by, but afforded him no Relief; for neither the Law, nor the Levitical Ministrations, could avail to Man's Salvation; such Help could only come from the Great Physician of Souls, and Friend of Sinners, *who Himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sicknesses* (b): And *the Lord that healeth* is his Name (c). But tho' this be the Inside and Spirit of the Parable, yet the Moral is drawn from the Outside and Letter of it: Did the *Samaritan* shew Mercy to the wounded and distress'd *Jew*, ministering to him the Means of his Cure, and defraying the necessary Charges of it? *Go, and do thou likewise*; be merciful after thy Power to all, and shew thy Love to God by this Proof of thy Love to thy Neighbour: For *whoso hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up the Bowels of his Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* (d)

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(a) For the spiritual Interpretation of this Parable, in its Reference to our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, see St. Aust. *Quæst. Evang. Lib. 2.* as also, *contra Pelag. Hypognost. Lib. 3.*

*Christi mos est in vulgaribus parabolis etiam sublimiora aliqua mysteria nobis commendare: ita certe hac in parabola admodum eleganter nobis summa nostris Christianismi ob oculos pingitur. Vid. Chemnit. Harm. Evang. in loco.*

See also the Spiritual Homilies of *Marcarius the Egyptian*. Hom. xxx.

(b) Matth. viii. 17. (c) Exod. xv. 26. (d) 1 John, iii. 17.

THE Application comes home to us, as Fellow-Christians, with additional Force ; and the Occasion of our present Meeting gives a particular Emphasis to it : And therefore let us turn our Thoughts to the *House of Mourning* (a), for we are told that the *Heart of the Wise* is there ; and thence learn a Lesson of Humility, a Lesson of Gratitude, and an Exercise of CHARITY.

WERE I to consider only *my own* Unfitness to be your Solicitor this Day, I shou'd have much Reason to be diffident of Success ; but when I consider *whose* Cause I plead ; when I consider before *whom* I plead ; and, above all, when I consider in *whose Name* I plead, I will not, I cannot think, that I shall plead in vain. Nor need I here to fetch any Weapons from the Armoury of Eloquence, nor seek to engage the Passions on my Side with artificial Strains of Rhetorick, seeing the INFIRMARY itself affords the most persuasive Motives to urge a compassionate Relief ; and it wou'd be sufficient for this Purpose, wou'd Time permit, to set open to your View that Theatre of Woes, where pining Atrophy (b), Convulsions, agonizing Throws, corroding Ulcers, the Torture of broken and dislocated Bones, and various other Maladies and Disasters incident to the human Frame, form one complicated Scene both of visible and audible Distress. Look down, you Wealthy  
and

(a) Eccles. vii. 4.

(b) See Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Book xi. Line 480.



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and Honourable Ones, from your Height of Opulency and Splendour, and in these Sons and Daughters of Affliction acknowledge your Brethren, and own yourselves to be but Men; for, *did not He that made you make them, and did not one fashion both in the Womb (a) ?*---Whilst, in the Phrase of *Job*, you *wash your Steps with Butter, and the Rock pours out to you Rivers of Oil (b)*, let the Streams of your Bounty refresh the Hearts of the Sorrowful, and your Abundance be the Supplement to their Wants. ---Thus may you excel in Goodness as in Greatness, and be counted worthy of double Honour.

I NEXT address myself to you who are in a middle Station, plac'd safely between the two Extremes of Affluence and Indigence, and so possess'd of what *Agur* pray'd for (c): And, as you know no Want yourselves, extend freely your Assistance to those that do. The Law commanded to help the Beast of our Enemy fallen under his Burthen (d): Bring not then a Reproach upon that Holy Name by which you are called, by refusing to help a Neighbour, a Fellow-Christian, being burthen'd with his Infirmities. A Retrenchment of the Vanities, Superfluities, or in the fashionable Expences of Life, will amply supply the Means of Beneficence to your distress'd Brethren; and, by such a Christian Piece of Oeconomy, you will join  
the

(a) Job xxxi. 15. (b) Job xxix. 6. (c) Prov. xxx. 8.  
(d) Exod. xxiii. 5.



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the Practice of two Duties together, whilst to that of *Charity* you add Self-Denial for *Charity's* Sake.

LASTLY, As to you whose Portion in the good Things of this Life is small, tho' yourselves no less dear to God on that Account, I must call upon you also for a Token of your Love. It was ordain'd under the Law, in the Matter of Offerings, that the Person, who was not able to bring a Lamb, shou'd bring two Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons (*a*); for no one was to *appear before the Lord empty* (*b*). Let not the Love of *Christ*, that perfect Law of Liberty, less constrain *you*: Let not the Free-Will Offering of your *Christian Charity* come short of the Command of a *Jewish Oblation*: If thou hast but little, yet be merciful after thy Power, and *do thy Diligence gladly to give of that little* (*c*): The little that thou givest will sanctify the little that is left, and, trust in the Lord, thou shalt have no Lack.

THIS Application to you all of every Degree, on the Subject before us, comes back'd with a Motive of undeniable Force, *viz.* that our Blessed Lord has declar'd his Acceptance of that Relief, which you afford to your afflicted Christian Brethren from a Spirit of *Charity*, as done to Himself; for such has He appointed his Substitutes for the Receipt of it: I call upon  
you

(*a*) Lev. v. 7. & xii. 8. (*b*) Exod. xxxiv. 20. (*c*) Tob. iv. 8.

## ( 27 )

you then, for Christ's Sake, that you be *ready to distribute, willing to communicate* (a) : Or, if this Argument fails, there remains at least one, which, if rightly laid to Heart, I am sure, must prevail ; which is, that we all stand in Need of Mercy, and therefore ought to shew it : I call upon you, therefore, for your own Sakes, by the Love you bear to your immortal Souls, that you come not short of the Promise of Him who hath said, *Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy* (b).

AND now having pointed out that most *Excellent Way* of CHARITY, or *Love* to God and our Neighbour, that Gospel Way of Pleasantness, that sure Path of Peace leading on to Glory, what remains but that we walk therein ? We are *called* Christians, professing one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism : Let us this Day shew ourselves to be such, not in Word only, but in Deed, and in Truth ; whilst our Faith worketh by Love, and our Love by shewing Mercy to the Poor.

IT is a joyful Thing for Brethren to meet together in the House of God as Friends : May this Joy be now fulfill'd in the Hearts of us all, both High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another ! and, as we join in one common Labour of Love towards the Needy and Afflicted, may the same good Disposition, improv'd, bring us together in the Unity of the Spirit,

(a) 1.Tim. vi. 18. (b) Matth. v. 7.



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Spirit, and in the Bond of Peace: Thus shall we add to *Brotherly-Kindness Charity* (a): Thus shall the happy Effect of our assembling together cause Joy in Heaven, and make glad the City of God, whilst Saints and Angels tune their Harps to louder Strains of Praise, as *they* sing “ GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,  
“ AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL  
“ TOWARDS MEN.”

(a) 2 Pet. i. 7.

*The E N D.*

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*By the same* AUTHOR.

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